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Land of Far Horizons

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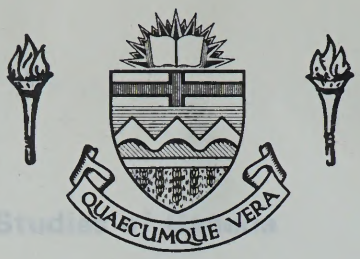

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SASKATCHEWAN *Land of Far Horizons*

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with George S. Tomkins

and Neville V. Scarfe

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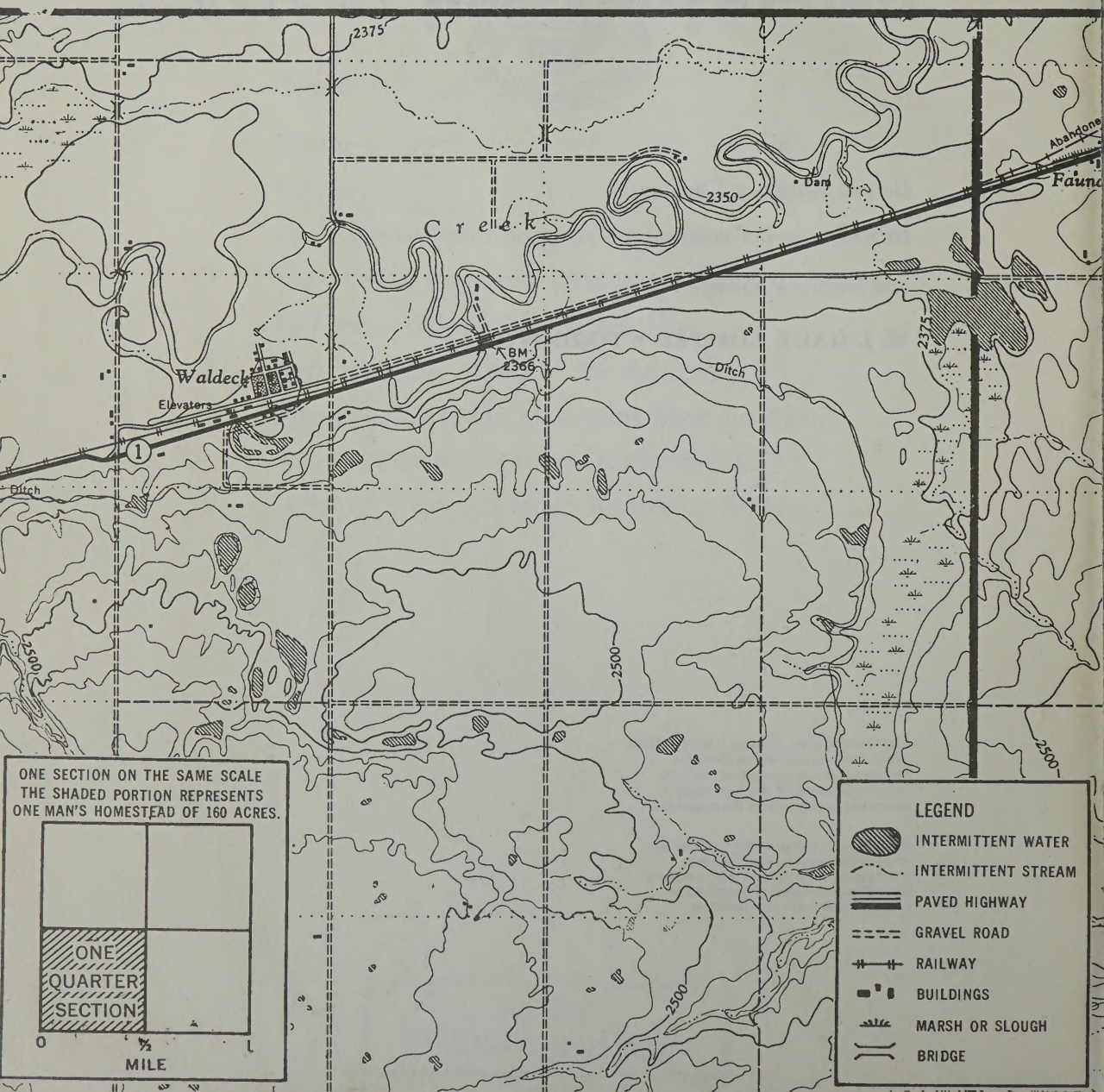
SASKATCHEWAN

Land of Far Horizons



In 1965 Saskatchewan celebrated its Diamond Jubilee. Many people remembered clearly the fifty years of this province's existence. The recollections of the old timers of Burnham are typical of those of many villages in Southern Saskatchewan. Locate this village in Figure 7-13.

The first settlers arrived in Burnham in 1905 and 1906. Some came directly from Great Britain, others moved west from Manitoba. Soon they were joined by immigrants from other countries.

What kind of land did the settlers come to?

Figure 7-1 is a large-scale map of the country near Burnham.

1. B. M. means a *bench mark*. This is where there is a sign on a post or wall telling the exact elevation of that point. How high is the land at the bench mark east of Waldeck? How high is the highest land shown on the map? The lowest point on this map is shown on the side of the road. How do the contours show that slopes are very gentle?

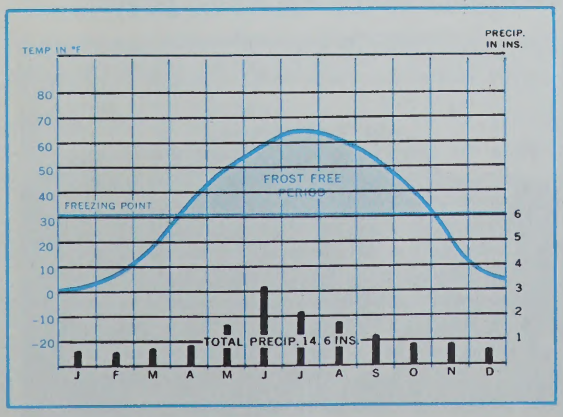
2. The squared pattern shows how the land was surveyed. Each of the squares shown is a section. Under the Homestead Act a man could claim a quarter section (160 acres) free of charge if he lived on it and brought it into cultivation under certain rules. The inset map shows how each section was divided among four homesteaders. If a homesteader decided to walk around his land how far would he walk? Why was it easy to lay out such a survey on this type of land?

3. How does the map suggest that the area is rather dry? How many of the sections shown have no permanent water supply on the surface?

4. How do you know that much of this land is poorly drained?

5. Figure 7-2 provides information about the climate on the Saskatchewan prairies. Compare these figures with those for Winnipeg. Here is a list of weather conditions. Beside each one quote the data that suggest that

7–2. A climatic graph of Regina.



Highest recorded temp. . . 110°F.

Lowest recorded temp. . . .—56°F.

Frost-free period . . . . . 93 days

7–1 (Opposite). A topographic map of the area near Swift Current on the scale of 1:50,000, Sheet 72J/5, East Half, in the National Topographic Series. (Dept. of Mines and Technical Surveys, Ottawa).

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it did or did not apply to the early settlers of Saskatchewan.

- intense winter cold
- very heavy snowfalls
- thick fog and very damp air
- high winds whipping snowstorms into blizzards
- short frost-free season
- low annual precipitation, very unreliable
- heavy summer rain or hail damaging crops
- lack of sunshine to ripen crops
- hot, steamy atmosphere

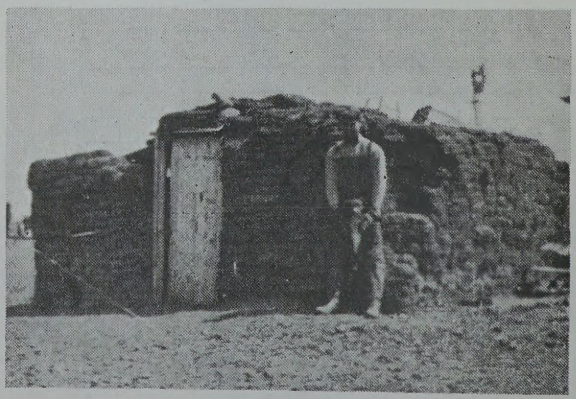
In good years when there is enough rain the farmers may reap a bumper crop. But experts think that only four such crops can be expected in any ten-year period. In years of drought it may be impossible to harvest enough crop to make any profit. Occasionally there is no crop at all.

Fifty years in a Prairie village

The first task of the original settler in Burnham was to put up a shelter. There were few trees or building stones on the prairie, so the first home was often a sod house. Slabs of sod were cut and put carefully together as a bricklayer lays his bricks. The inside surface was then smoothed and plastered with mud to make it airproof. Figure 7-3 is a photograph of a sod house. One settler claimed that his neighbors in frame shacks found his sod house a cosy refuge during the weeks of forty below zero weather.

Often the early settlers worked on the construction gangs which were then building the railway west from Swift Current. When they had earned enough money to buy horses and machinery they started farming in earnest.

The winters were very severe and blizzards were common. Settlers had to walk many miles to obtain their supplies. Frostbite was not unusual, and the danger of becoming lost in a sudden snowstorm was always present.



7–3. A sod house was often the settlers first home.

They walked to Swift Current or Waldeck for their supplies. This meant a round trip of 28 miles each time they bought food or other requirements. How did the supplies reach Waldeck and Swift Current? Food was often in short supply, and some pioneers recall living for many months on potatoes and salt or potatoes and syrup. Sometimes the settlers went out on snowshoes to hunt rabbit or prairie chicken. There were still some buffalo in the area, and occasionally the meat could be obtained from the Indians.

Fuel was very scarce and expensive. Many stoves burned hay, straw, and buffalo chips. Sometimes firewood and water were hauled several miles from the wooded river valleys.

Settlers were arriving rapidly, and homesteaders often camped outside the land office for several days in the lineup to obtain their land grants. In Burnham it became obvious that a school was needed, and on August 4th, 1908, a building was opened. It still stands, but in 1954 it was closed and now the children are taken by school bus to Swift Current each day.

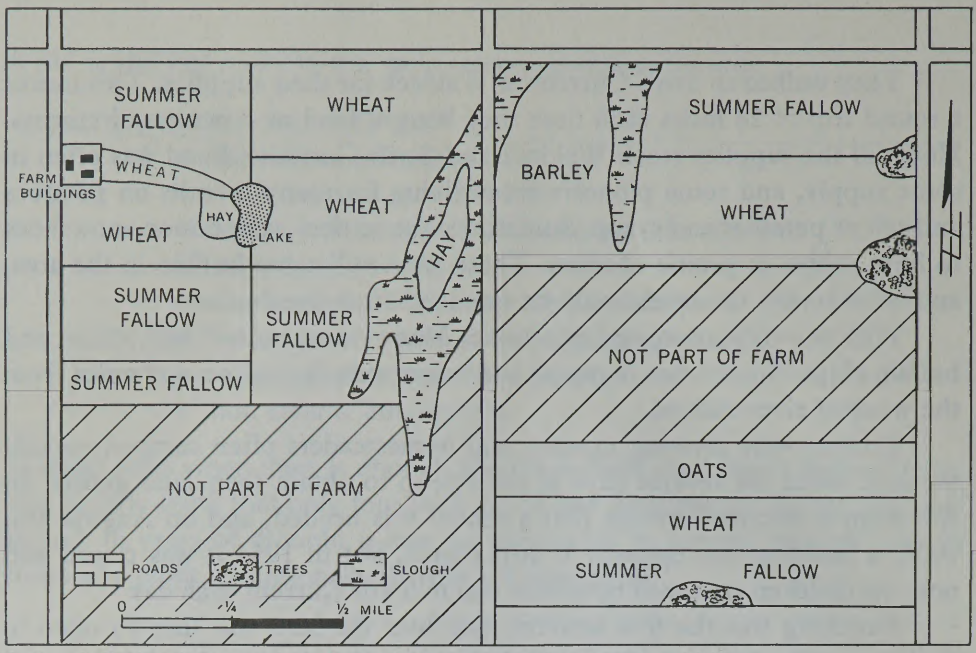
Ranching was the first activity, but later the land was thrown open to settlement. The homesteaders used their oxen to break the sod and then sowed it with grain. Bumper crops were produced, and wheat was hauled to the railway at Waldeck by team wagon or sleigh. Why was this sometimes a hard and difficult trip? Frost often threatened the ripening grain. In 1915 a big prairie fire, started by a careless farmer, destroyed many thousands of bushels of wheat, tons of hay, and buildings.

By the 1920's, the Burnham area had become an important wheat farming region. Some settlers had moved away, discouraged by the many problems, but others had farmed more successfully and enlarged their farms to take up the abandoned homesteads. Farms were getting bigger. Large crews of men operated the early farm machinery. They worked from dawn to dusk in the race to harvest the grain before winter. Farm wives cooked day and night preparing food for the large numbers of hungry workers.

Within a few years the machines were idle and the men were seeking work eleswhere. These were the drought years of the 1930's. No crops could be grown. The farmers of Burnham had relied almost entirely on wheat for their living. They had no other crop to sell and no other work to do. Buildings became shabby and out of repair, and horses and carts replaced the automobiles which farmers could no longer afford to run. Many people did not have enough to eat, and often wages were paid in potatoes because money was very scarce. Here is how one traveller described southern Saskatchewan in the days of the drought.

> One had to turn on the lights in the middle of the day, so dark did the dust-storms make it. In the midst of one of them I could see the outlines of a man ploughing. Poor fellow, every yard his tractor went, he was helping to destroy the very earth by which he lives. Houses were deserted, fences covered by the drifting soil.*

*Quoted from *Unconventional Voyages*, by A. R. M. Lower, Toronto, The Ryerson Press, 1953, page 144.



7–4. A Saskatchewan wheat farm showing crops harvested in 1969.

The drought ended in 1938, and World War II produced a great demand for wheat. The land began to produce again. New machinery, to be worked by only one or two men, was bought. Electricity came into most homes. Grain sales to China and Japan in the 1960's brought a new prosperity to the wheat farmers of Saskatchewan.

Problems of Prairie settlement

1. What problems did the climate of Saskatchewan pose for the settler?
2. Fuel and shelter were two of the settler's greatest needs. Why were they so difficult to obtain? How did the settlers solve the problem?
3. Why is it unwise for farmers to depend on one crop for their income?
4. What factors led to the renewed prosperity of Southern Saskatchewan as a great wheat growing area since 1940?

A modern wheat farm

1. Figure 7-4 is a plan of a 1,280 acre wheat farm northwest of Regina. The average size for a Saskatchewan farm is 686 acres. Compare this with the size of the farms in Southern Ontario. One man handles all the work on this farm, except at harvest time when he hires extra hands to drive the trucks. He uses a great deal of modern machinery. Figure 7-5 shows wheat being harvested. This machine works in the fields of growing wheat. Only the tiny grains are being poured into the truck. How many men are working to harvest this whole field?

7—5. Harvesting wheat near Regina (Massey-Ferguson Limited).

2. What is the chief crop? When there is enough rain, the rich, brown soil produces large crops for export. The grain is sent by rail to Vancouver or Montreal and from there to Japan and Europe. Wheat sales are the farmer's chief source of income.

3. How much of the land was in *summer fallow* in 1969? This land produced no crop that year. Among the green or gold fields of grain it stood out as brown empty patches all summer. The farmer works hard to keep weeds out of these areas. Refer to Figure 7-6 and find out for how many months

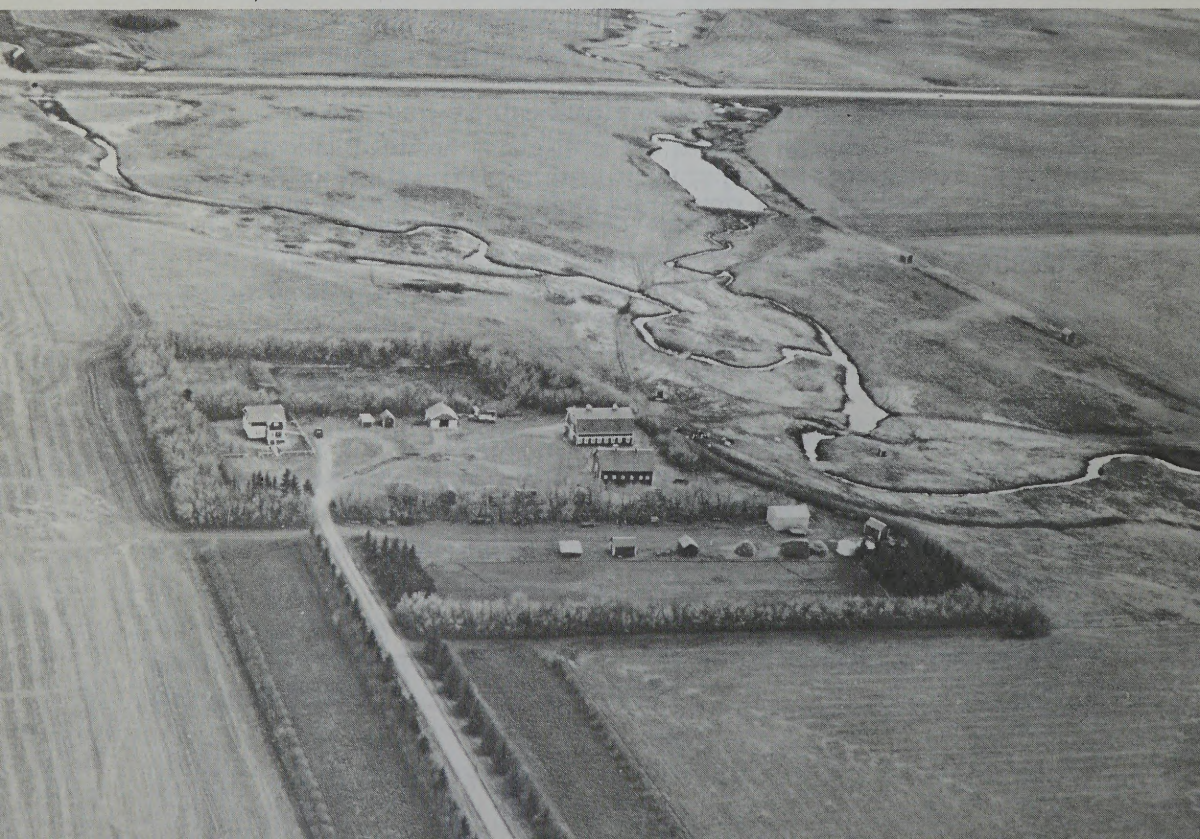
7—6. The year's work on a Saskatchewan wheat farm.

	Wheat	Sheep	Other
JAN. FEB.	Haul last year's crop.	Feed sheep	Repair equipment
MAR.	Prepare seed grain	Prepare barns for lambing	
APR.		LAMBING	
MAY	Seeding, fertilizing. Cultivate summer fallow	Shear sheep	
JUNE	Spray crops. Summer fallowing		
JULY	Harvest hay. Summer fallowing		
AUG.	Service harvest equipment	Sell lambs	
SEPT.	HARVESTING		
OCT.	HARVESTING		
NOV.	Haul grain, repair machinery		Store machinery
DEC.		Feed sheep	Bookkeeping

he cultivates this soil. None of the moisture that fell on this fallow land was used by plants in 1969. The farmer hoped that in 1970 the moisture which had collected, plus the precipitation for that year, would be enough to produce a good crop. He saved up the moisture and goodness of the soil for the next season. In 1970 all the summer fallow areas were sown with grain, and the fields that had produced wheat in 1969 were rested. This is known as *dry farming* and helps farmers in dry areas to get better crops.

4. Sheep are also kept on the farm. They fit in well with grain farming. When is the busiest period with the sheep? After the lambs are born, the animals graze outdoors on the rough parts of the farm which are not suited for grain farming. The lambs are sold in August or September, having required no housing or special food other than pasture. What is the farmer doing during these months? In Figure 7-4 find the slough. This is low lying land with a rather rough surface. Locate a slough on the map in Figure 7-1 and in the photograph in Figure 7-7. This farmer also uses this part of his farm for grazing. How has he provided drinking water for his animals? About 100 ewes are kept all winter. After harvest they graze in the fields until December. They do not need much food in winter. Why is this an advantage to the farmer? What animal feed does he take from his land without decreasing his wheat acreage? Sale of lambs for meat is the chief source of income from livestock, but wool is also sold. Other grain farmers keep cattle and hogs.

7–7. An aerial view of a farm near Regina (Saskatchewan Department of Industry and Information).



5. Wind is one of the most noticeable features of the prairie climate. How has the farmer in Figure 7-7 protected his home from the wind? Such groups of trees, known as *shelter belts* or *windbreaks,* are often the only trees visible for miles on the prairie. How has wind aided the prairie farmer in his search for water?

Hail, frost, and drought are hazards still faced by prairie farmers. Special frost and drought resistant varieties of wheat have given the modern farmer advantages over his pioneer grandfather. Also, modern machinery enables him to seed or to harvest his crop in a much shorter period of time. This may give him just enough extra days at either end of the season to save his crop. The invention of the windmill pump for obtaining water from deep wells helped to solve many problems for prairie farmers. Trees, stumps, and stones are no longer a problem. Once the steel plough was invented, it broke the sod fairly easily and the rich soils yielded excellent crops.

Railway lines were already built when the prairie farmers began to produce their crops. Grain elevators such as those shown in Figure 7-8 were built beside the tracks in every Saskatchewan town. Standing high above the level surface, they are the most striking feature of the landscape. Special grain-carrying freight cars and boats and special loading and unloading equipment helped transport Saskatchewan wheat to the increasing markets in

7–8. Grain elevators near Swift Current (Saskatchewan Department of Industry and Information).

Europe. The development of the wheat trade on the prairies influenced every part of Canada. Today, when the Saskatchewan farmer produces grain for shipment to China or Britain, workers as far apart as Vancouver, Halifax, Churchill, and Montreal earn their living directly from handling the shipments.

The flat, treeless land which was so easily brought under cultivation using modern machinery also posed problems for the early settlers. Wood was required for houses, fuel, fencing, and railway ties. It had to be brought from eastern Canada, and other materials were used whenever possible. What substitutions were made by some of the early settlers? The invention of barbed wire solved the fencing problem, and was one of the most important factors in the development of prairie agriculture. Fencing is still one of the major expenses when livestock are kept.

7–9. Cattle at a waterhole (National Film Board).

Another generation of pioneer farmers

1. How did the problems that faced the prairie settler differ from those of the nineteenth century immigrants to Upper Canada? Remember that the prairie settlers arrived at a later time, as well as in a type of country different from the pioneers of Ontario.

2. Compare the work of modern Saskatchewan farmers with that of the homesteaders.

(*a*) What problems are common to both generations.

(*b*) What inventions and improvements have assisted modern farmers in their work?

How has Saskatchewan tried to reduce its dependence on wheat?

Wheat has been so important in Saskatchewan that it has long been the province's emblem on highway maps, stationery, and automobile license plates. Wheat is still the most important item produced, but it is no longer the only exportable product. Not only have mining and manufacturing been developing rapidly since World War II, but other types of farming have been expanding too. What other form of farming was of major importance in the farm we studied? Why have prairie farmers tried to reduce their dependence on wheat?

Making the best use of dry lands

The southwestern corner of Saskatchewan is the driest part. There is seldom as much as ten inches of precipitation. It is also the hottest section, so the moisture evaporates rapidly. Wheat can be grown on this land, and in the 1920's, when climatic conditions were good and wheat prices were high, a great deal of land was put under wheat. During the droughts of the 1930's this region became almost a desert.

In 1935 the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act was passed. This Act tries to help farmers to make the wisest use of water and the best use of land. Advice has been given to farmers on how to conserve and improve their soil. How did the wheat farmer we studied try to save the moisture in his soil so that it could be used later? Tree planting helps control soil drifting. In dry years the bare soil of some of the ploughed land was simply blowing away. Much land has now been restored to permanent grass and is used for grazing.

Figure 7-9 shows cattle on a ranch in southwest Saskatchewan. Describe the relief and vegetation of this land. How has the farmer provided drinking water for his animals? In some areas the P.F.R.A. operates community pastures. Figure 7-10 shows farmers sorting out their animals at the end of

7–10. Farmers collecting their animals from Wellington community pasture, Saskatchewan (P.F.R.A.).

7–11. This farmer is trying to collect as much water as possible for use during the dry summer (P.F.R.A.).

the season. Farmers whose stock use these pastures can spend all their time cultivating crops on their own land.

Farmers are advised about the use of their own water. Figure 7-11 shows how trees planted near a dugout form a collecting place for snow and slow down its melting. How does this help the farmer make better use of his dugout? What other useful purpose do these trees serve? Community dams and dugouts and coin-operated wells have also been built.

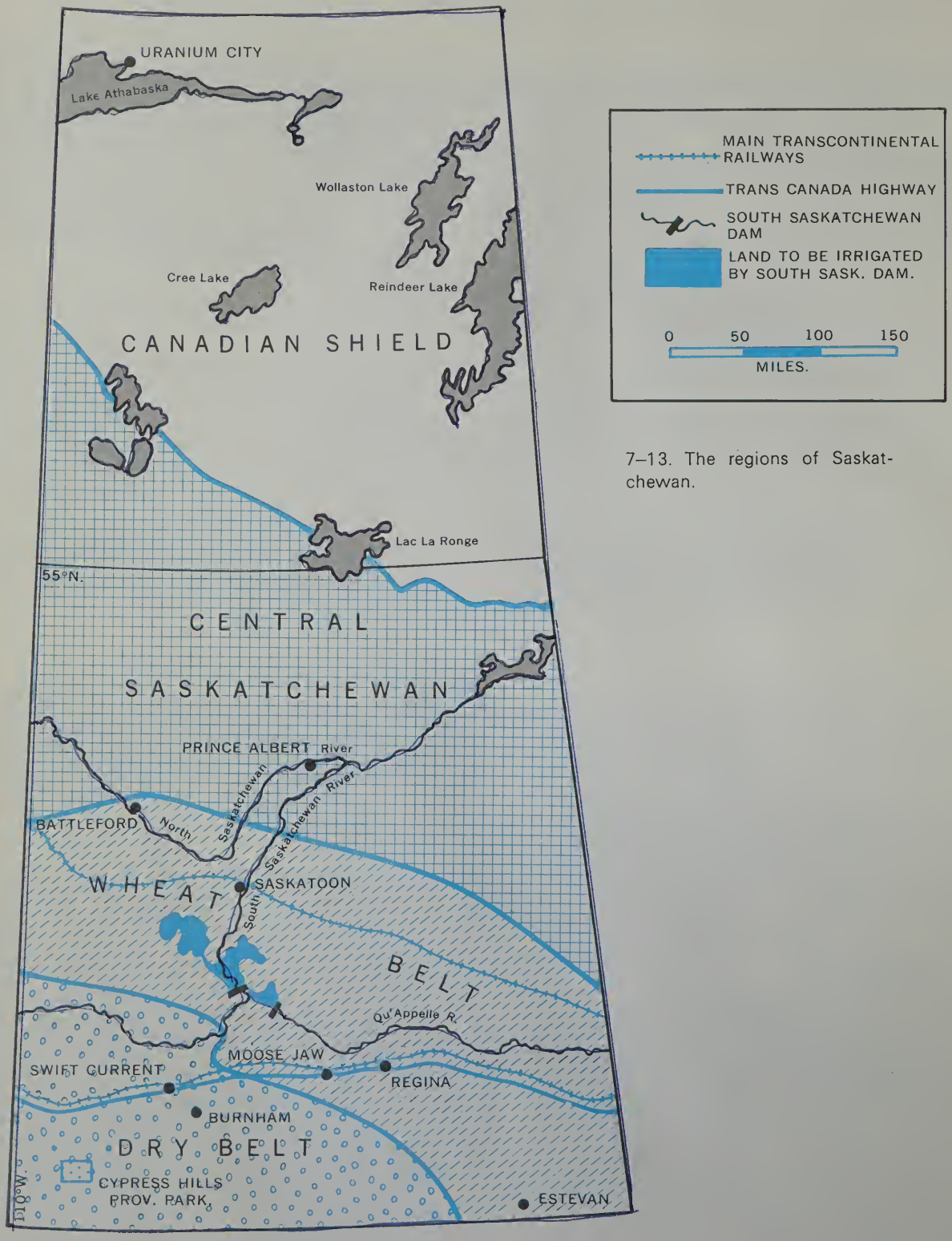
Irrigated farmlands

Figure 7-12 shows two fields of oats which were planted on the same day. One received only rainfall, but the other received irrigation water and is thicker as well as higher. Years of adequate rainfall have already proved that prairie soil is very productive if only enough moisture can be obtained. Now scientists and engineers are trying to ensure that enough water will always be available.

Look at the map in Figure 7-13. What major rivers flow across Saskatchewan? Here is a description of the South Saskatchewan by an early immigrant.

> The water was very high and fast. It was also very wide, almost like a lake, and small islands with trees growing on them were in the middle of the stream. . . . Although the Saskatchewan looked wide and serene, it was really very fast and

7–12. Irrigation is the best answer to the prairie farmers' problems. (Saskatchewan Government).



7–13. The regions of Saskatchewan.

treacherous. It created sandbars overnight, and then as quickly washed them away again. Sometimes it scooped out deep holes, and undermined the banks in unexpected places.*

What features can you see in Figure 7-14 that are mentioned in the description? Imagine you approached the river from the land in the distance. Over what kind of country would you travel? Why would you not see the river until you were at the very edge of the cliffs? Most prairie rivers flow in deeply cut valleys of this type. They are called *entrenched valleys*. Why is it difficult to use river water for irrigating the farmland on the plateau surface?

The rivers are the chief source of irrigation water available in Saskatchewan. A large dam has been constructed near Outlook. It is hoped that this South Saskatchewan River Project will provide irrigation water for

*This account and the extract on page 235 are quoted from *Gully Farm,* by Mary Hiemstra, and reproduced here through the courtesy of Mrs. Hiemstra and McClelland and Stewart Ltd.

7–14. The Saskatchewan River has cut a steepsided valley into the plain (Saskatchewan Department of Industry and Information).

7–15. Irrigated water reaches a Saskatchewan wheatfield (P.F.R.A.).

500,000 acres of land. More fodder crops and irrigated pastures will be available for the livestock. Later it is hoped to develop vegetable farming. Locate the new irrigated lands in Figure 7-13. Figure 7-15 shows irrigation water being applied to a field of wheat.

Increased quantities of cheap hydro-electricity are available now that the dam and power houses are completed. Shortage of power has long been one of the greatest handicaps to Saskatchewan's industrial development. Why is Southern Saskatchewan not rich in hydro-electric sites? The sale of power often helps pay for irrigation, flood control, and other aspects of major projects. Where in Canada have vast quantities of power been developed in association with improved navigation channels?

Recreational resources of Southern Saskatchewan

Refer to Figure 7-13. In which part of the province do most of the people live? There are few parks and recreational areas in Southern Saskatchewan, and the small provincial parks which do exist are in the extreme corners of the province. Where is there a vast recreational area in Saskatchewan? Why

7–16. Wooded slopes in the Cypress hills (Saskatchewan Department of Industry and Information).

are the parks unfavorably located with regard to the centres of population?

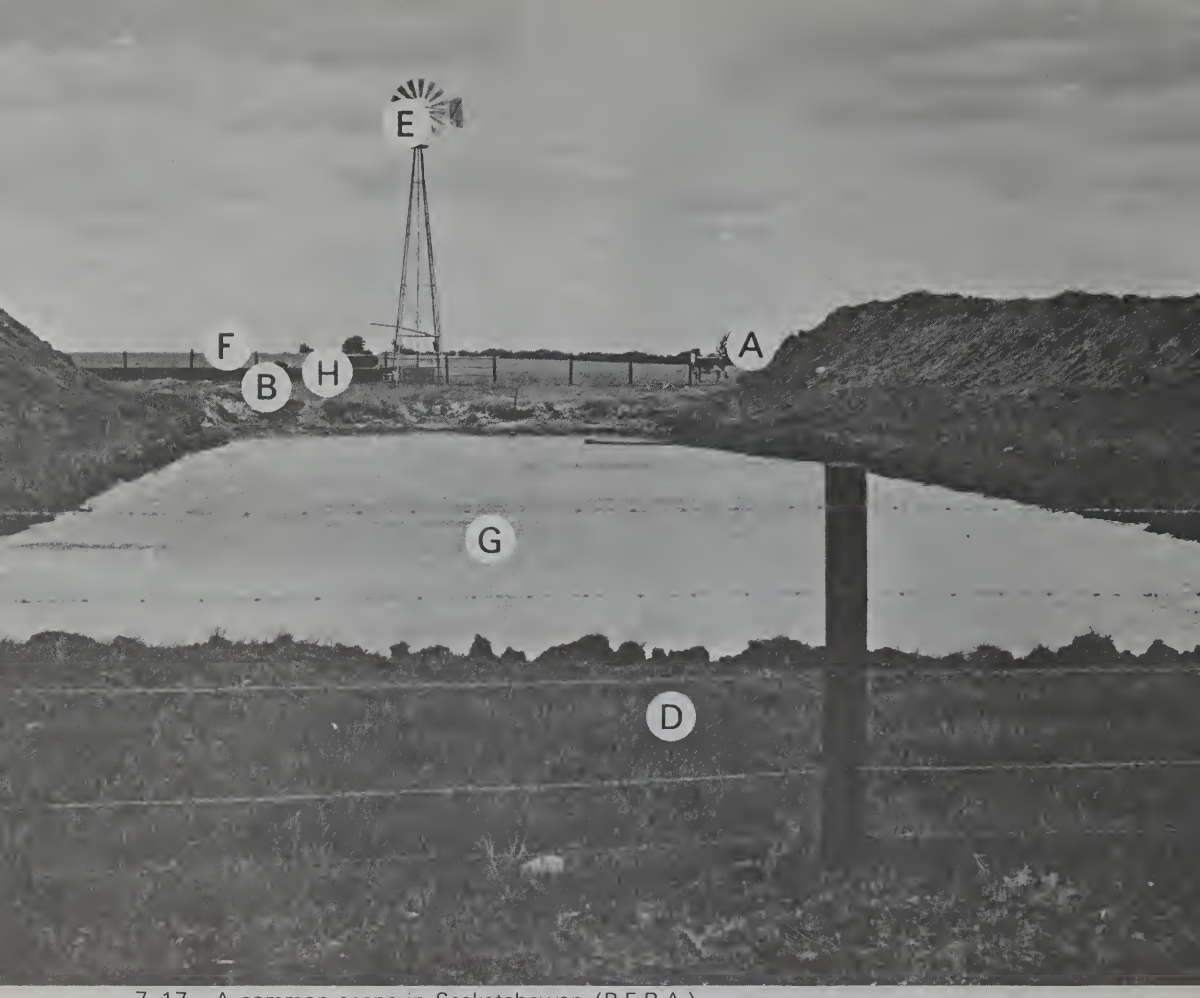
The new reservoir created by the South Saskatchewan dam will provide many recreational facilities. Camping and picnicking, boating and swimming, hunting and fishing will all be promoted. Plans have also been made for developing parks linked by a scenic highway along the Qu'Appelle River.

Figure 7-16 shows one of the chief recreational areas of Southern Saskatchewan. Describe this country. What features make a visit here a change of scenery for a prairie wheat farmer?

A picture summarizes many features of agriculture in the Saskatchewan prairies

Figure 7-17 is a picture taken near Swift Current. Study the statements below. Each letter on the photograph illustrates a feature of prairie agriculture. In your notebook write the correct letter beside each statement.

1. This type of land surface enables farmers to use large-scale machinery in huge fields.



7–17. A common scene in Saskatchewan (P.F.R.A.).

2. This is the natural vegetation of the prairies which provides few problems in clearing and seeding land.

3. These have been planted by farmers in order to provide shelter from the wind and to help anchor the loose soil.

4. This type of fencing has helped make it possible for animals to be kept on the prairies.

5. Drinking water of this type has been provided for the animals by man. It is not a natural feature.

6. This invention, now becoming obsolete as farms are electrified, made it possible for farmers to obtain water from underground.

7. Raising these animals is better suited to some parts of the prairie than raising wheat.

8. This building material is in very short supply on the prairies.

Despite all the changes taking place in prairie agriculture, Southern Saskatchewan is still chiefly a wheat producing area. The main travel routes cross the province through the heart of the Wheat Belt, and fields of grain

7–18. Pioneer farms north of Prince Albert (National Film Board).

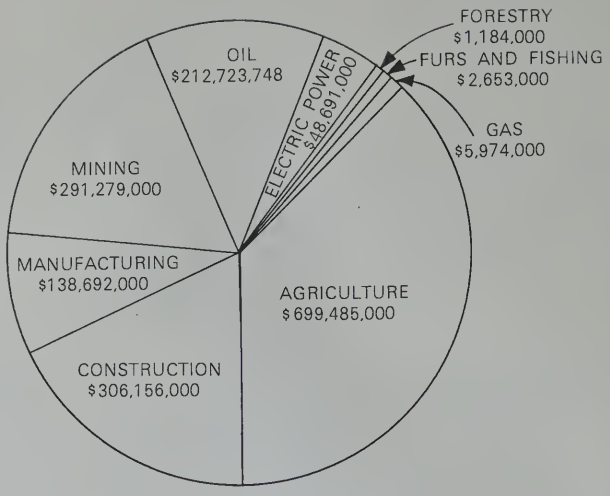
extend as far as the eye can see in every direction. Those who travel across Saskatchewan along the Trans-Canada Highway or by the transcontinental railways, often receive the impression that Saskatchewan consists entirely of an endless succession of huge wheatfields.

Mixed farming in central Saskatchewan

Refer to Figure 7-13 and estimate what proportion of the province is included in the Wheat Belt plus the Dry Belt. An equally large area is covered by the Saskatchewan section of the Canadian Shield. This area is similar to Northern Ontario and Quebec.

Between these two major zones of Saskatchewan is the transition zone. Figure 7-18 is a view of farmland in this section. How does the land resemble that of Southern Saskatchewan? What aspects remind you of the Canadian Shield?

This is a mixed farming zone. Wheat is still grown widely but fodder crops, cattle, and hogs are also very important. Precipitation is unreliable



7–19. Sources of Saskatchewan's wealth in 1966.

and the growing season short. Soils are thin and acidic. In the southern half of this belt, mixed farms are well developed. North of Prince Albert new farms are still being established in the bush. This area is usually known as the *pioneer fringe* because these farmers are colonists breaking in new land. What are their main problems? Further north farms disappear altogether as the mixed forest zone of the pioneer fringe merges into the lake and rock country of the Canadian Shield.

SASKATCHEWAN TURNS TO INDUSTRY

Before World War II, wheat was Saskatchewan's only major product. Hardly any of the province's own requirements of mineral and manufactured goods was produced locally. The freight cars from Saskatchewan carried little but wheat, while those rolling into the prairies from the east were loaded with all kinds of manufactured goods.

Today the grain elevator is no longer the only large structure to rise above the prairie skyline. Oil pumps rock ceaselessly in the middle of the wheatfields. Drills, storage tanks, and the geometric patterns of oil refining equipment are dotted over the farmland. Large modern factories sprawl in the midst of the flat fields. Huge steam shovels are scooping up mineral wealth from the surface, and smoke from the mills and refineries drifts across parts of the plains.

No longer does Saskatchewan depend on agricultural produce alone for its wealth. Figure 7-19 shows the sources of Saskatchewan's prosperity in 1966. What proportion was accounted for by agriculture? How does the diagram show that new developments are creating a great many jobs?

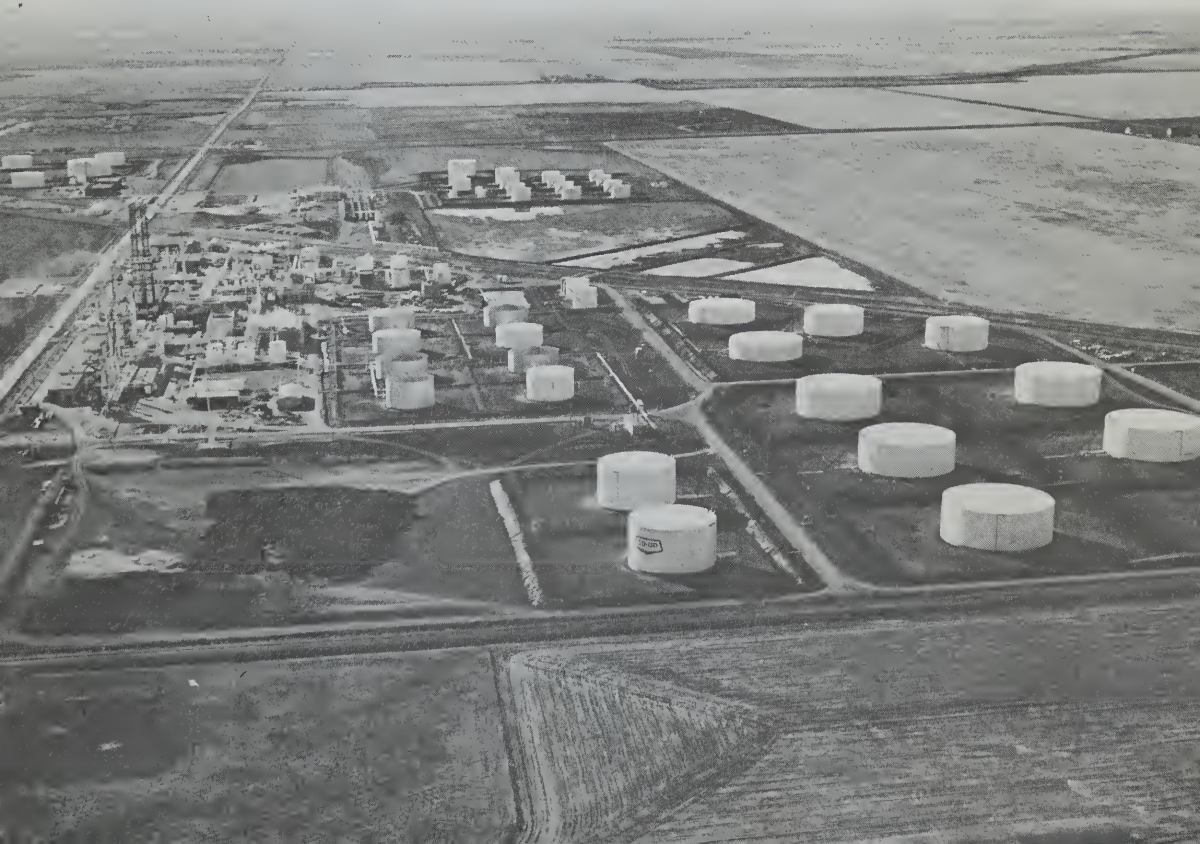
7–20. Name two great natural resources of Saskatchewan represented by these buildings (Saskatchewan Government).

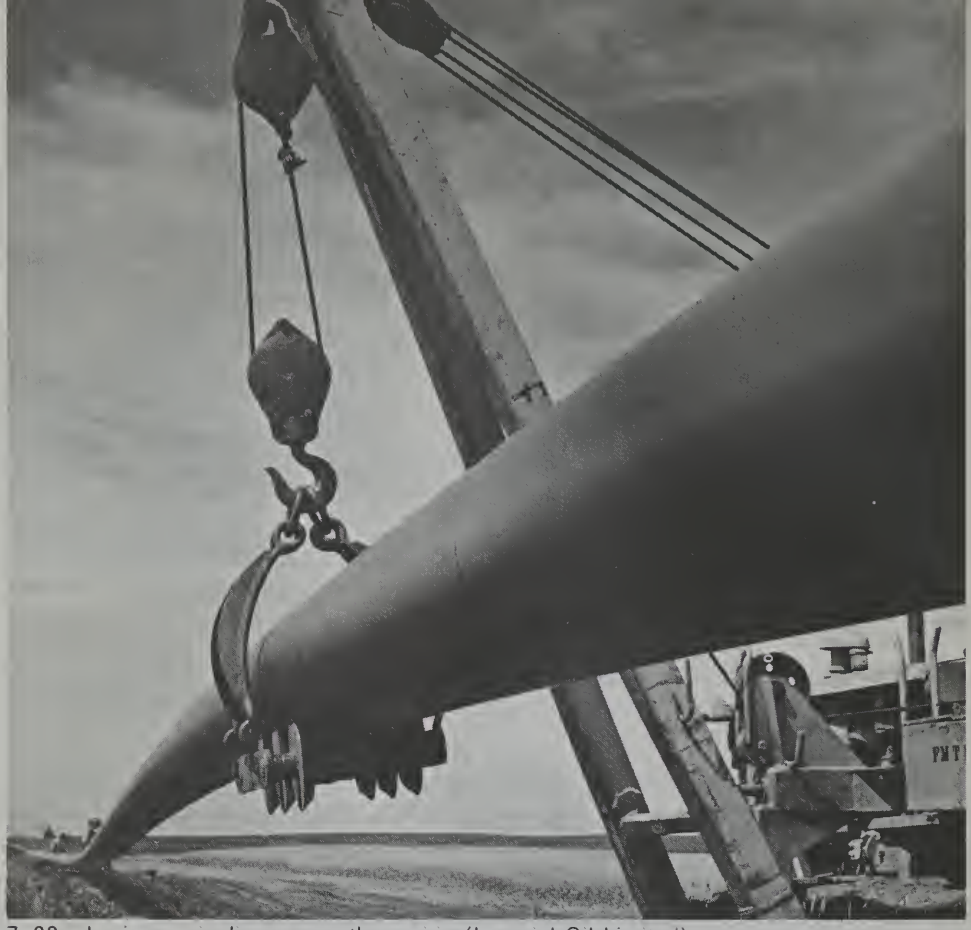
The mineral wealth of Southern Saskatchewan

Oil and natural gas

Figure 7-20 and Figure 7-21 show how the oil industry has invaded the wheat-fields of Southern Saskatchewan. Oil pumps are now a common

7–21. Oil refineries and wheatfields outside Regina (Saskatchewan Department of Industry and Information).



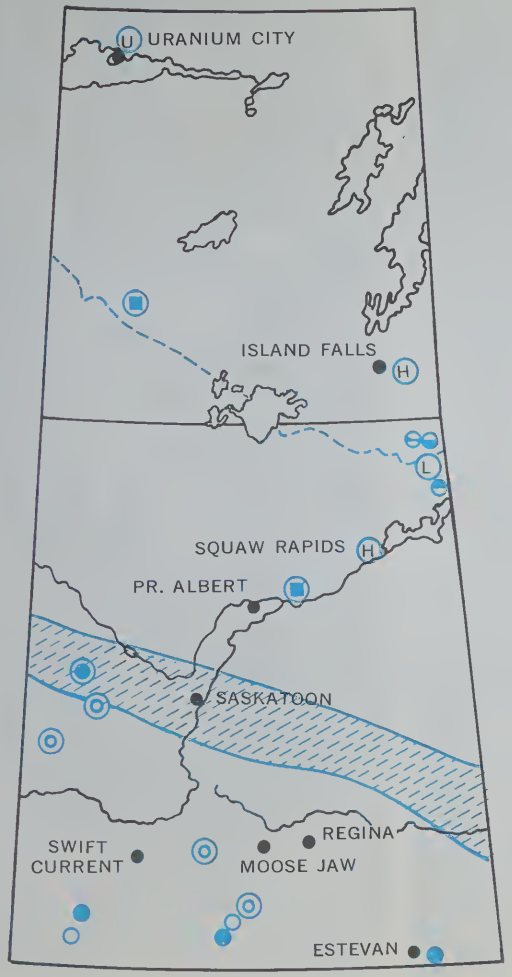


7–22. Laying a pipeline across the prairie (Imperial Oil Limited).

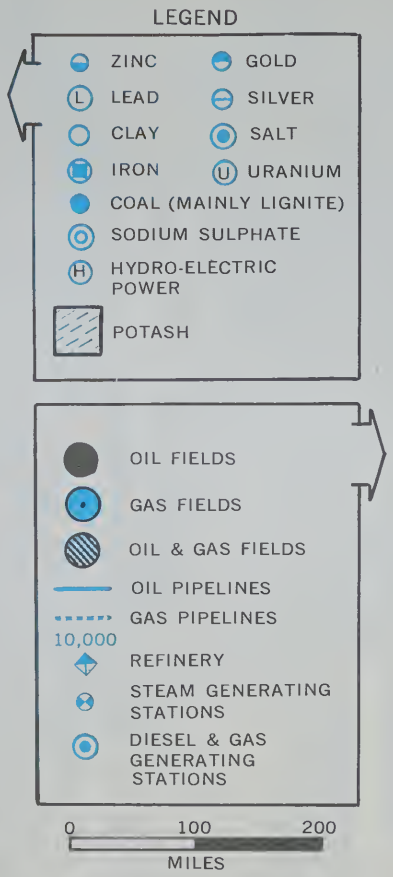
sight. In 1950 Saskatchewan produced less than one million barrels of crude oil. By 1966 the output had risen rapidly to more than 93 million barrels. The production of natural gas had increased even more. For the people of Saskatchewan these new developments mean more jobs, better conditions, and increasing wealth. Many people are employed in refineries such as that shown in Figure 7-21. By 1958 more people were employed in the oil refineries shown in Figure 7-24 than in flour mills. Which towns have large numbers of people employed in this industry? Figure 7-22 shows a pipeline being laid. Trace the course of the oil and gas pipelines in Figure 7-24. Some of the fuel is burned in Saskatchewan homes and factories. A great deal is used to produce electricity. How many diesel and gas generating stations are shown in Figure 7-24? Oil and gas are also sold to other provinces and states.

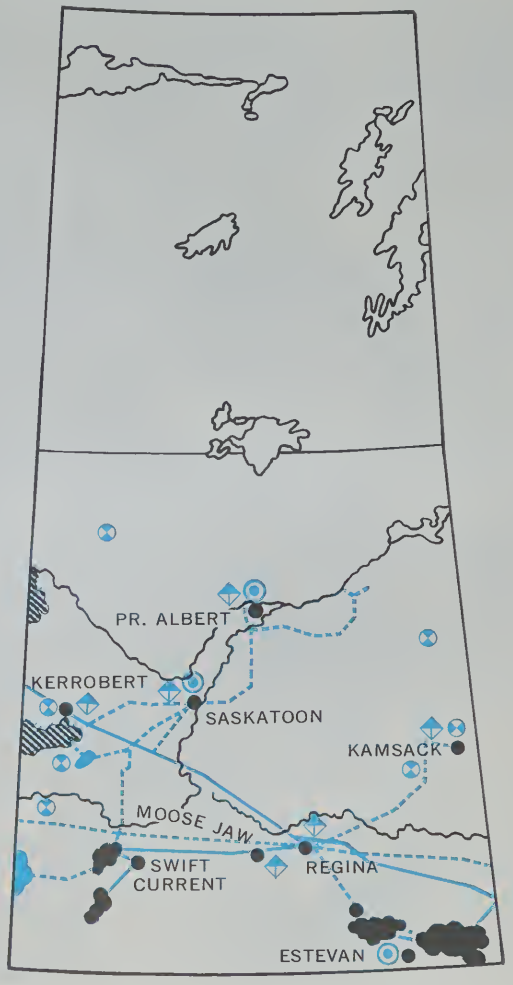
Other minerals

Southern Saskatchewan is covered by materials laid down long ago by seas and ice sheets. These do not contain valuable metals, but Figure 7-23 shows that other important minerals are found. Make a list of all the minerals found in Saskatchewan south of Prince Albert.

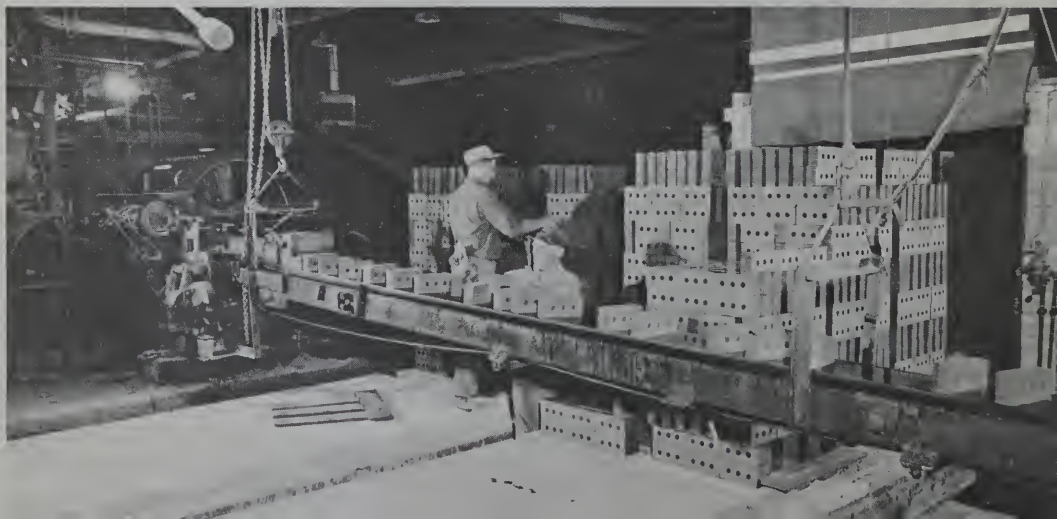


7–23. Mineral wealth in Saskatchewan.





7–24. Oil and natural gas in Saskatchewan.



7–25A (Top left). Strip mining near Estevan. Compare the size of the stripper with the size of the truck beside it.

7–25B (Centre left). A potash mine and mill near Saskatoon.

7–25C (Bottom left) Making bricks at Estevan.

7–25D (This page). Packaging salt at Unity.

7–25. Working with Saskatchewan's minerals (Saskatchewan Department of Industry and Information).

Saskatchewan's new industries use local minerals

1. The steam shovel shown in Figure 7-25A is working near Estevan. What is being mined? Each time the bucket bites into the surface of the earth 35 cubic yards of material are removed. This cheap and easy method makes it worth-while to mine the coal even though it is of poor quality. Most of it is used to produce electricity. Which cities are shown to have steam generating plants in Figure 7-24?

2. Sodium sulphate is necessary for the production of paper and newsprint. In which part of the province is it mined? Saskatchewan is the only commercial producer in Canada. What provinces require large quantities of this mineral salt? Why is it important to Canada as a whole?

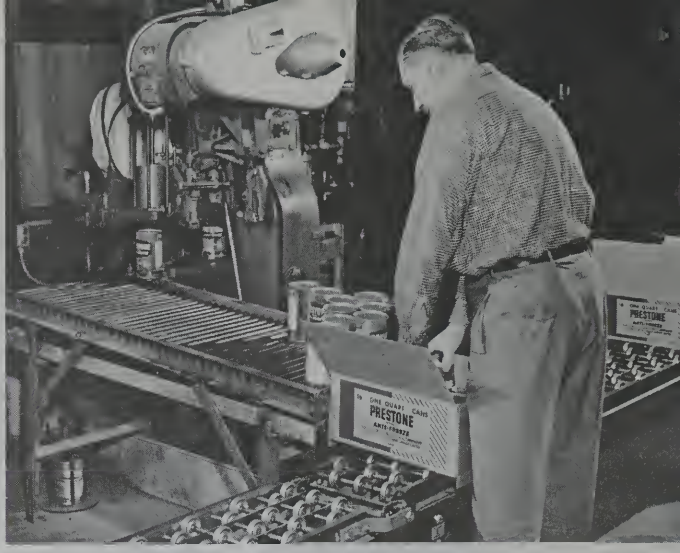
3. Figure 7-25B shows a multi-million dollar potash development near Saskatoon. Describe the location of the potash belt. Most of the output is used for fertilizer. Saskatchewan has one of the world's greatest deposits of potash.

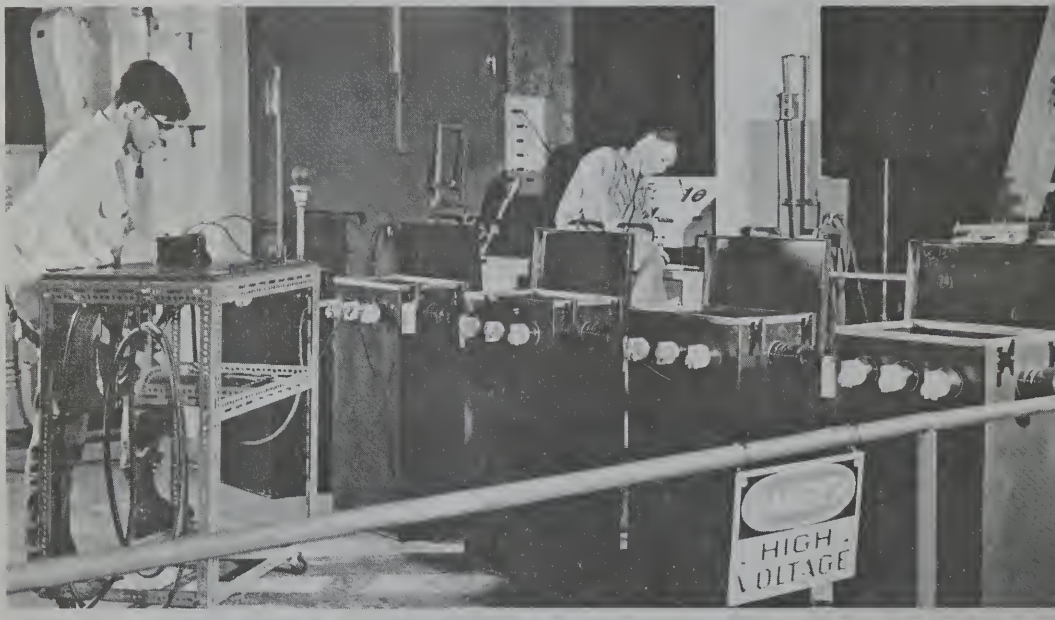
4. Which of Saskatchewan's mineral deposits are the workers in Figure 7-25C and D using? Brick-making factories are widespread in Southern Saskatchewan. Before 1949 all salt was brought in to Saskatchewan, but now a large part of the domestic, industrial, and farm supply is made locally.

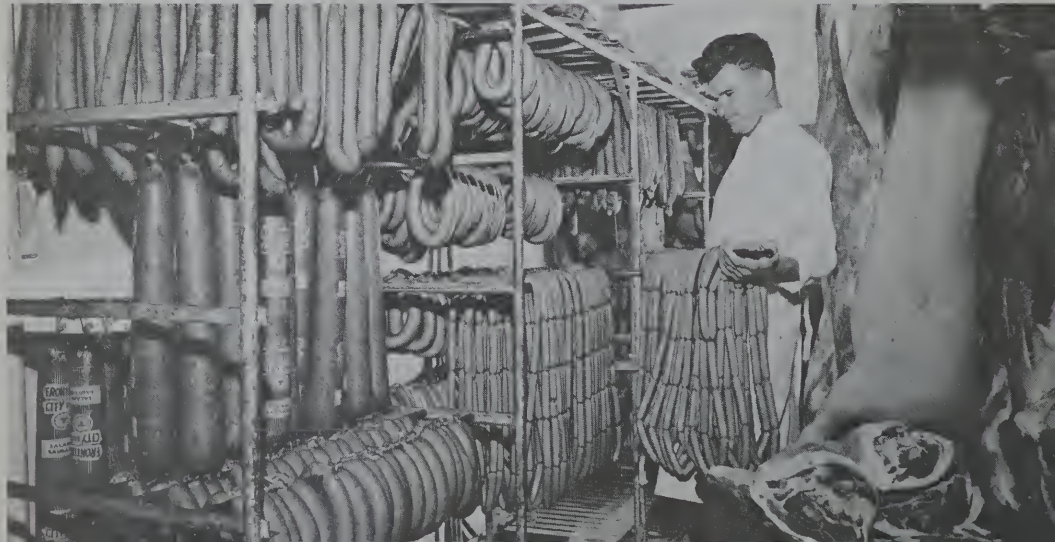
7–26A (Top). A worker in one of Saskatchewan's new chemical industries at Moose Jaw.

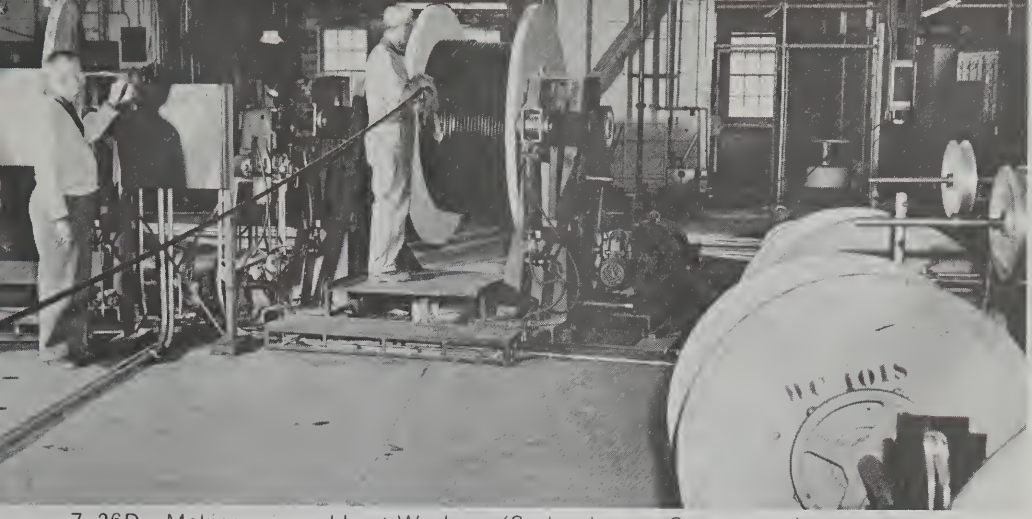
7–26B (Centre). Testing transformers at Regina.

7–26C (Bottom). Making weiners at Swift Current.









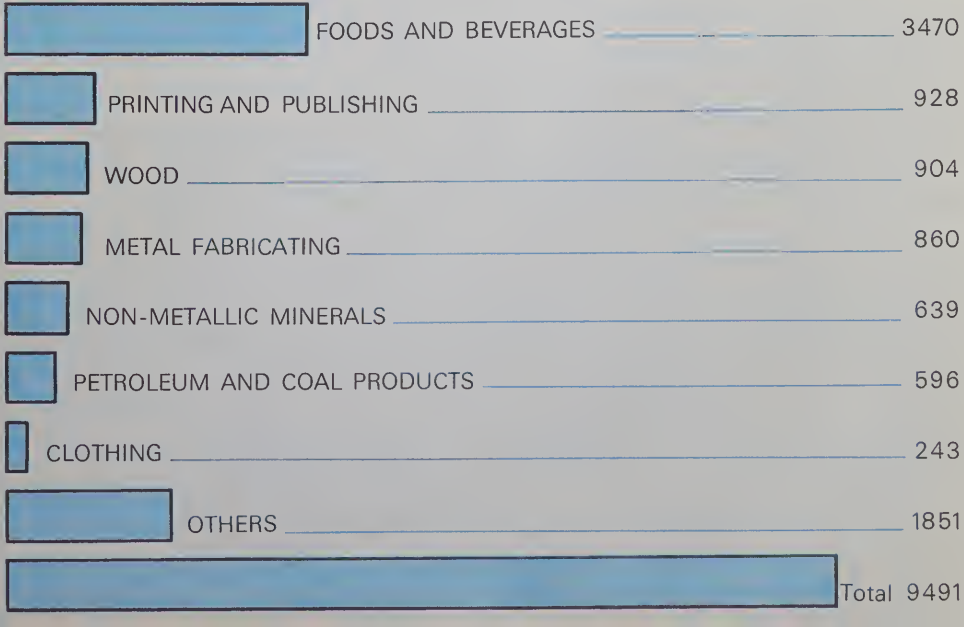
7–26D. Making wire cable at Weyburn (Saskatchewan Government).

Saskatchewan's expanding industries

Figure 7-26 shows people at work in Saskatchewan factories. Which of these industries has been established on the prairies for a long time? Flour milling, meat packing, butter and cheese making, bakery products, and others based on agricultural produce still employ more people than the more recently developed industries. Only a tiny fraction of the province's requirements of agricultural machinery, furniture, clothing, and similar manufactured goods is supplied locally. But a variety of factories is beginning to appear.

Refer to Figure 7-27 and find out what percentage of the workers in 1965 were employed in industries based on agriculture. Though oil refining is now the most important industry by value, more people are employed in the various food industries.

7–27. Numbers employed in Saskatchewan industries, 1965.



7–28. Western Canada's first steel mill is located amid the wheatfields outside Regina (Saskatchewan Department of Industry and Information).

Figure 7-28 shows Saskatchewan's new steel mill at Regina. This provides raw materials for a variety of secondary industries. What new industries are represented in Figure 7-26? Furniture, aluminum windows, pre-fabricated houses, trailers, clothing, and various chemical products have all been produced in the province during the past ten years. Saskatchewan still buys most of its manufactured goods from elsewhere, but is no longer completely dependent on agricultural produce to buy everything else. How many people were employed in metallurgical industries in 1965? What other non-agricultural industries appear on this list?

Wealth from the Canadian Shield

Figure 7-29 shows Indian trappers on Lac La Ronge. They are bringing their furs for sale. What season is this? Trapping is an important source of income, and each winter the trappers hold a convention to discuss new methods of trapping, preparing pelts, and marketing. Above all, they must be sure that

there will always be enough fur bearing animals to provide an income in the future. This means careful control over the number and types of animals trapped. Commercial fishing is also important in the northern lakes. Whitefish, pike, and trout are the main catches.

For many years Indians, trappers, woodsmen, and prospectors have led lonely lives among the lakes and woods of Saskatchewan's north. As the aeroplane has become more common and roads gradually push northwards, others come to the north for shorter periods. Figure 7-30 shows tourists in the Lac La Ronge area. Why do people from further south like to visit this country? How is it different from their home areas?

7–29. Indian trappers on Lac La Ronge (Saskatchewan Department of Industry and Information).

7–30. Vacation country in the Canadian Shield of Northern Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan Department of Industry and Information).

7–31. This fireguard would help to halt a fire in the spruce forest near Lac La Ronge (Saskatchewan Government).

7–32. Smoke jumpers help fight fires in remote areas that cannot be reached by road or rail. (Saskatchewan Government).

Figure 7-31 and 7-32 are also scenes near Lac La Ronge. What resource is shown here ? The cleared land is a *fireguard*. When a forest fire is reported the ranger checks its position, finds out where the nearest fire-fighting equipment is available, and calls out the fire-fighting crews. Sometimes *smoke jumpers* must be parachuted into remote areas. The fire is surrounded by a strip of material that will not burn. It may be a road, a river, lake, or swamp, but is usually a fireguard cut by hand. It is hot, dry, dirty, tiring work with shovels and axes. Bulldozers are seldom available in the bush. After the fire is out, the ranger must see that all the equipment is returned and cleaned, ready for another emergency. He must make up his accounts and pay slips for the crews. He must write a report on the causes, rate of spread, and extent of the fire. He must find out how much damage has been done. It is not surprising that Forest Rangers are always urging people to be careful not to start fires by carelessness in the woods.

What minerals are shown in the Canadian Shield in Figure 7-23 ? Figure 7-33 is an aerial photograph of a uranium mine on Lake Athabaska. Which

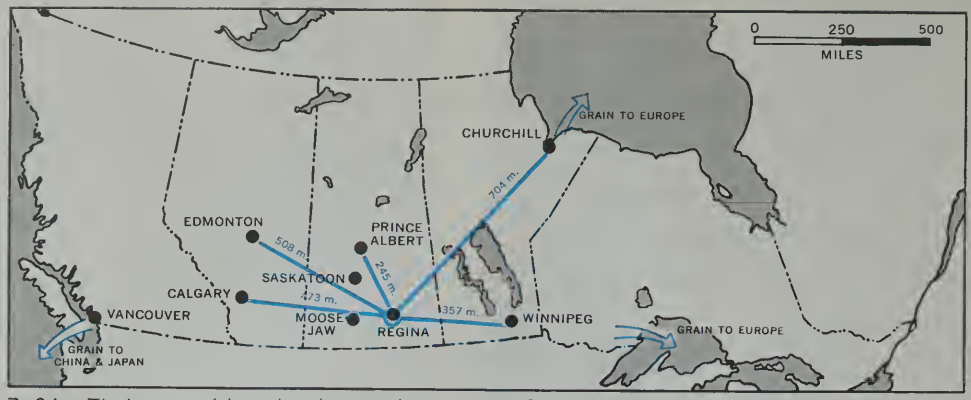
letter on the photograph labels the following characteristic features of the Canadian Shield?

Rough, rocky land
Gentle slopes and an even skyline
Many irregularly shaped lakes
Forest of rather small, coniferous trees
Mine for metallic minerals

Uranium City began to lose population when the market for uranium declined. Which Ontario town faced the same problem? The ores mined on the Manitoba border are smelted in Flin Flon. Which hydro-electric plant in Saskatchewan provides power for the smelters?

The resources of the Canadian Shield provide a great deal of wealth for Saskatchewan and help its industrial growth. But it is unlikely that there will ever be a large number of people living in this area. Why is it difficult for large towns to grow up in this part of the province?

7–33. A uranium mine in Northern Saskatchewan (Saskatchewan Government).



7–34. Their central location is an advantage to Saskatchewan cities.

Saskatchewan's villages and towns

Only one third of the people of Saskatchewan live in towns larger than Goderich, Ontario. The other two thirds live in small centres with less than 5,000 people, often with less than 50 people. Find such a village in Figure 7-1. The railway line with its grain elevators, stockyards, freight sheds, and coal yards is always the most noticeable feature of these small towns and villages. Figure 7-8 shows the scene in a small centre near Swift Current. How many elevators line the track? Suggest why piles of sawn lumber are standing beside the tracks. Nearby is a group of small stores, a gas station, a cafe, and some houses. What special buildings does Figure 7-1 show in Waldeck? People come in from considerable distances to take advantage of these services. A few trees have been planted to provide a welcome shelter from the hot summer sun and the icy winter winds. In the huge open spaces of the prairie, the small cluster of buildings seems to huddle close to the railway line which has for so long been its lifeline to the world outside. Recently many branch lines have been closed. As a result, elevators are boarded up and stores closed down. Trucks carry goods to and from the main railway lines; families travel by car to shop in the larger centres. Many of the tiny settlements are disappearing.

Figure 7-34 shows why the cities of Saskatchewan count their central position as an asset. These cities are in a good position to import raw materials from all directions and to sell their products all over the prairie provinces. How does the central position help Saskatchewan to take advantage of several widely spaced world markets for its grain?

Regina — Saskatchewan's largest city

In 1968 Regina had 137,000 people. A great deal of transcontinental road and rail traffic passed through the city. Multi-million dollar factories had been built on the outskirts. Huge oil refineries employed many people. New office buildings changed the city skyline every month. Public buildings, including

a new university campus, and parklands provided for the welfare of its inhabitants. Regina is a bustling, growing city making every effort to improve its facilities.

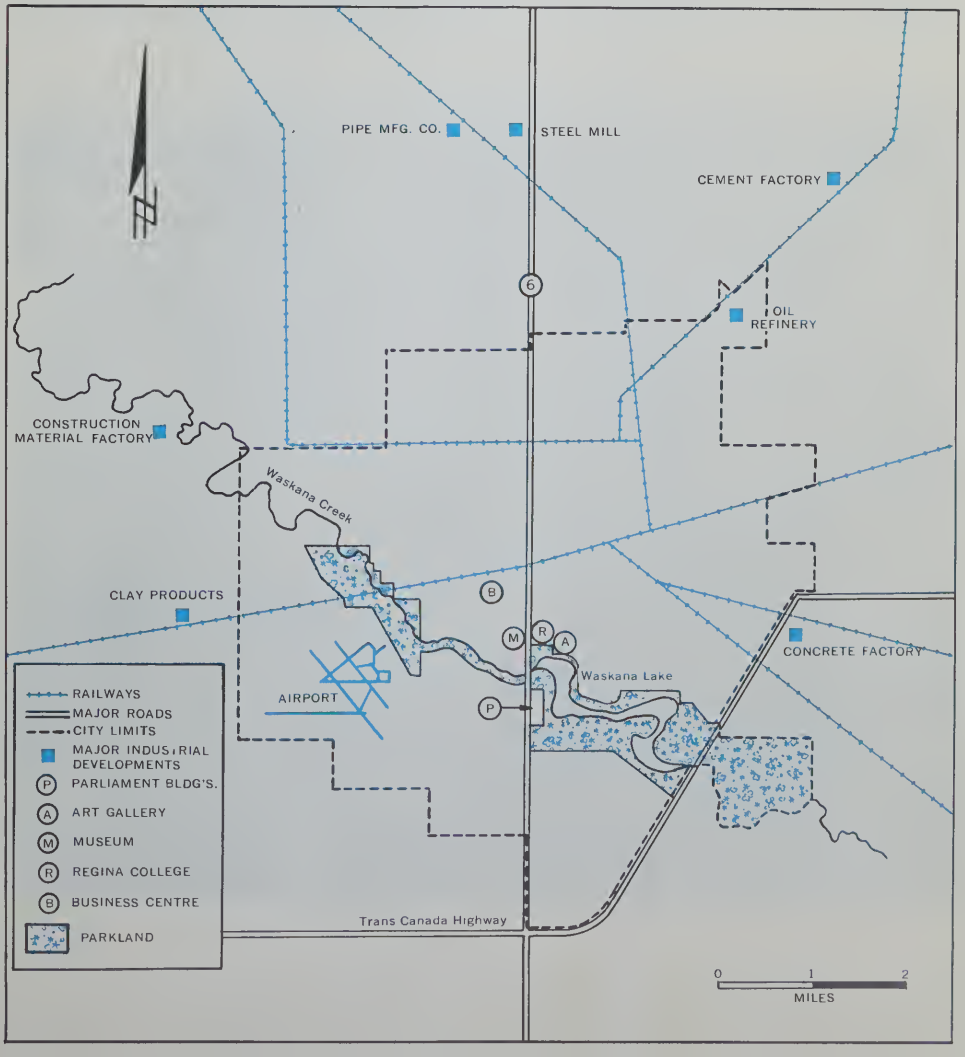
Here is what a Canadian newspaper wrote about the site when it was chosen for the capital city of Saskatchewan in 1883:

> One thing is certain, Regina will never amount to anything more than a country village or town, for the simple reason that in neither its position nor its surroundings is there anything to give it the slightest commercial importance. Situated in the midst of a vast plain of inferior soil, with hardly a tree to be seen as far as the eye can range, and with about enough water in the miserable creek known as — PILE OF BONES — to wash a sheep, it would scarcely make a respectable farm, to say nothing of being fixed upon as the site for the capital of a great province. The place has not a single natural advantage to commend it.*

What did the writer say about the appearance of the land at Regina? In Figure 7-35 find Waskana Creek (which used to be known as "Pile of

*Quoted from the *Winnipeg Free Press.*

7–35. A large-scale map of Regina.



Bones Creek"). How has its appearance changed since the writer saw it? The scenic lake with its wooded shores has been formed by damming the tiny creek.

How many railways meet at Regina? Its position as a route centre is one of the chief reasons for Regina's growth. Until World War II, Regina was almost entirely an agricultural centre. The "vast plain of inferior soil" had proved to be some of the best wheat land in the world. Supplies, for example farm machinery, were sent by rail to Regina and then sold all over the Wheat Belt. Farm produce was brought into Regina, which soon became a centre for such industries as flour milling and meat packing. How was its central position and the network of railways helped Regina to attract other non-agricultural industries? What characteristic of the land surface, noted in the newspaper, is an advantage in laying out modern factories? What industries are shown on the map. Which use locally produced minerals? Agricultural industries are still very important.

What sources of energy are available in Regina? Why is hydro-electricity likely to become important in the future?

What are the large buildings in the foreground of Figure 7-36? Refer to the map and list all all the other cultural and educational functions of Regina.

7–36. An aerial view of Regina (Saskatchewan Government Photo).

An incorrect forecast

How would a visit to Regina today convince the newspaper writer that he had been wrong in his opinions about Regina's future?

Saskatoon

The first white men to visit the site of Saskatoon probably arrived by canoe. The first settlers came in wagons drawn by horses or oxen. Theirs was a slow, dusty journey across the open prairie. In 1903 Mary Hiemstra arrived with her parents. They came by train. This is how she described it:

> There wasn't even a real station, only a small house and a long platform. A short distance ahead a few tents, round and small, crouched on the other side, and that was all.
>
> There was no town at all at that stop, only prairie on both sides of the track.

Today you might arrive by automobile on a paved road. Transcontinental buses call at the city every day. Both C.N.R. and C.P.R. railway lines serve Saskatoon by their main transcontinental routes. The airlines provide

7–37. The centre of Saskatoon from the air (Saskatchewan Government Photo).

direct service to Vancouver and to all the major prairie cities, from which connections to other parts of North America can be made. How would you reach Saskatoon from your home town?

Figure 7-37 is a view of Saskatoon. What river must be crossed by rail and road routes at this point? Notice the steep banks. How has this feature assisted Saskatoon to use its river as a scenic area? In many cities wharves, railway sidings, stockpiles of raw materials, or smoking factories line the banks of rivers which are often polluted with sewage and industrial waste.

These are the chief products made in Saskatoon:

flour	poultry
rolled oats	hardboard (made from straw and wood)
vegetable oils	potash
feed for livestock	meat (especially hogs)
butter and cheese	

Which is the chief type of industry? Saskatoon is the centre for a rich farming area. Now that the South Saskatchewan dam is completed, irrigation water will be available close to the city. How will this increase the agricultural industries? It will also provide power. How does Saskatoon obtain power now? A large number of smaller factories produce a variety of goods such as furniture, clothing, and metal goods for the local market.

Saskatoon grew up on the west bank of the river. Over fifty years ago the University of Saskatchewan was founded on the east bank close to the centre of the city. Fine buildings of gray stone placed among shaded lawns overlooking the river make this a scenic attraction as well as an important educational centre.

Saskatoon with 125,000 people is almost as big as Regina, 167 miles southeast. Both are located in the Wheat Belt of the open prairie. In what ways has their growth been similar? How does Saskatoon appear different to the visiting tourist?

Moose Jaw and Prince Albert

These are the only other cities with more than 20,000 people. Locate them in Figure 7-13. Here is a list of things you would see in or around one or both of these cities. Beside each one write the initials of the city or cities where they are seen.

The Trans-Canada Highway
Open fields with very few trees
Wood processing plants
The main transcontinental railway

Trappers and prospectors
Large areas of cultivated land with no crop growing
Agricultural industries
Northern Administration Department
Mixed farms
Large grain elevators
Oil refineries
Natural gas fuel
Steam generating plant
Bush fliers
Forest and lake country
Pulp mill
More wheat than any other crop
Hunters and fishermen

Which of these cities is very similar to Regina and Saskatoon? Prince Albert is in the Mixed Farming Belt. It serves as the headquarters for lumbering, mining, and tourist development in Northern Saskatchewan.

A symbol for Saskatchewan

1. Why did the wheatsheaf become the symbol of Saskatchewan?
2. Why do many people think that the emblem should now be changed?
3. To what extent is "Land of Far Horizons" a good title for this study?

Topics for discussion

1. Why did the population of Saskatchewan decline during the depression and war years?
2. What are the chief population trends within the province at the present time?

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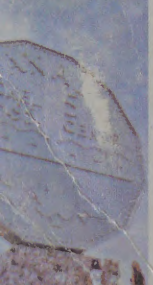
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